

# Queen Was Groomed For Role From Her Earliest Childhood

## Monarch's Young Life Spans Quite A Distance In Britain's Changing Social History

By Robert Temple

As the great golden coach comes in sight, millions waiting at the curb or by a television set may think of the life of our young Queen. They may look back on the life that they have watched develop to be crowned on this day. They may remember that their Queen was born in a London townhouse not half a mile from the route of the procession, very early on a fine spring morning in 1926.

The house was at 17 Bruton street, and was the old-fashioned home in London of the Earl of Strathmore (the Queen's grandfather.) The Duke and Duchess of York converted a room into a nursery on the second floor of this house — which, though numbered in Bruton street, actually faced Berkeley Square. But the Queen cannot go back to look at her birthplace because the old house was sold and demolished some years later and now a great block of modern offices stands on the site.

Although the Duke and Duchess modernized the place to some extent, it is strange to recall that even such a little while ago these great town houses were run with many more servants than the Princess had later when she managed her own home at Clarence House. And when 17 Bruton street was acquired for demolition, the contractors found in its basement a curious relic of the Victorian age—a row of 20 copper baths which each morning the servants used to carry to the guests' rooms and fill from hot water cans brought through the winding corridors.

The infant Princess was in London for only the first three months of her life. They were troubled months but she, at least, was not touched by the General Strike which took place then. After her christening in the chapel at Buckingham Palace, she travelled north for the first time to her ancient heritage of Scotland. Glamis Castle is a noble keep, gloomy, lofty and resplendent with barbaric history. There Macbeth received his thans: there the ancient regalia of Robert Bruce lay hid.

### Comfortable Home

It is, and remains, the home of the Earls of Strathmore and it had been converted by the present Queen's grandfather into a fine and comfortable country residence by the addition of a modern wing. It was there that the Princess spent the first summer of her babyhood.

Even the Queen's young life spans quite a distance in Britain's rapidly changing social history. These were the 1920's and almost historical era shot with the scarlet and gold of luxury and privilege—although the fabric was wearing threadbare.

The Duke of York, as the King's second son, was perhaps able to lead more nearly the kind of life he liked than ever could the Prince of Wales. The life of the Duke of York chose as his ideal was that of a quiet-living country squire; his interests lay in the care of his estates and gardens, and the pursuance of a benevolent, unassuming life as a family man.

He had married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, descended through an ancient line from the kings of Scotland. And, under the influence of his wife who was later to be Queen, he adopted much of the air and the manner of a Scottish laird. Certainly the family life of the York household was very far from Mayfair's glittering round.

Rather, their life, and so the life of the Princess, was traditional and conducted with a simplicity that must have made the childhood of the Princess happy and well-regulated. The little girl was in the charge of a Scottish nanny—the same who had cared for her mother. Life in the nursery was enlivened with delight at the arrival of "Lilibets" first pets—two affectionate Chows.

### Empire Era

The 1920's, as well as being the age of extravagant parties, was the era when the Royal Family became conscious of Britain's overseas interests and needs. On the King George V announced to everyone's consternation after his coronation, that he would go to New Delhi (just built by Sir Edward Lutyens) for the Durbar, the monarchy had been amazingly insular. But after the first World War, the world-wide connections of Britain, both within and outside the Empire, (as it was still called) were paid ever-increasing attention by the Royal Family.

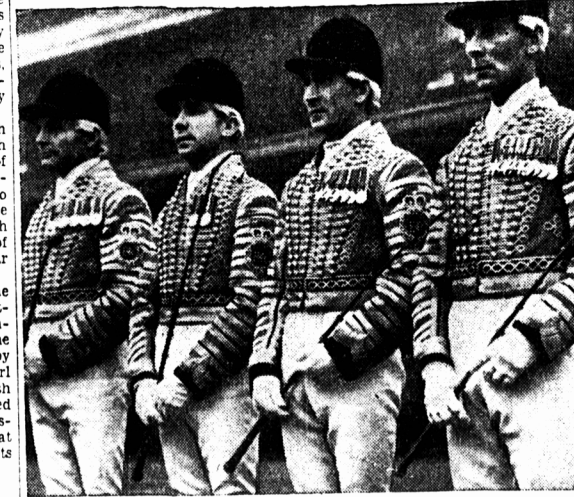
The Prince of Wales set out on his travels which were to give him fame as the Wandering Prince of Empire. And when in 1927 the Commonwealth of Australia planned to inaugurate its first Parliament in the new capital at Canberra, Australia invited the Duke of York, with the Duchess, to attend as his father's representative. Whether the absence of her parents for six months touched the consciousness of the infant Princess is not known. She spent the time of her parents' journey across the world first with her Royal grandparents in Buckingham Palace, and then with her other grandparents, the Strathmores, at their English country home. Perhaps it was then just as she was first sitting up and expressing herself, that there began the very real and clear attachment between the Princess Elizabeth and her grandmother, Queen Mary. Certainly we can see all through her childhood the little Princess being taken out and walking hand in hand with the tall, dignified, cultured Queen.

The Duke and Duchess of York certainly found it a wrench to be parted so soon from their small daughter. When they returned, plans had already been made for them to move into another town house which, to Londoners, came

to be associated with the two Princesses. It was 145 Piccadilly. The house was by no means palatial or in the Royal manner—it was just another old-fashioned solid house in the row at the south of Hyde Park facing Piccadilly. It was destroyed by a bomb during the last war. The Duchess of York was at first determined that no particular attention should be paid to the Princess and, like any other child, she was taken in her pram into the park. But the people would not have it. In a few weeks such a large crowd was regularly waiting at the gate into Hyde Park that the Duchess had to decree that the baby should take her airing in the private garden only. Before the Princess was three she had herself gone on a little journey with the eyes of the country upon her. She travelled with her grandfather, the King, who went to convalesce at Bognor after his attack of pneumonia. There the King and the toddling little girl strolled hand in hand for a brief weeks in the troubled life of monarchy.

### Sister Arrives

The greatest events in a child's life are the advent of brothers and sisters. The Princess Elizabeth was soon eager to see the baby sister, Margaret, who was born at Glamis Castle. The Duke of York was now, more than ever, a family man. A problem was discussed in the Royal Family—where should the Duke of York and his family make their home? It may seem to the public that the choice of a residence is never a problem



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for Royalty. But, in fact, King George V possessed a number of houses and these he offered to his sons. The Prince of Wales made his home at Fort Belvedere. The Duke of York and his Duchess found Royal Lodge at Windsor suited their taste.

The education of a Princess might be a fitting subject for argument between philosophers. Is it learning that makes a just ruler? Or is it better that a ruler should be unversed in scholarly arts in order to come to the task of ruling with a clear judgment? It could be long debated. But, as far as the Princess was concerned, it was soon clear that she was to become one of the best educated and well-versed of little girls.

Until she was 11 her education was normal and quite relaxed. But then, even at that tender age, the cares of responsibility were suddenly thrust on her by the abdication of her uncle, King Edward VIII.

### Life Divided

If, on her Coronation day, Queen Elizabeth II looks back on her life, she will surely see that it divides with that unhappy day in September 1939 when war broke out. In that she is like so many of her subjects. If we remember that the Princess was only 13 when the war began, and that she was 19 when it ended, we will have a better understanding of her life. What did it mean to other little girls of her generation to have their schooling and their time for fun and laughter cut into by the war?

Quite obviously, it was no better for the Princess. For the Royal Family were under strains that were even more burdensome than those imposed on their subjects. The King was terribly overworked with state business; the

Queen and her elder daughter, particularly, were worried about his health; the war restricted the Royal Family's movements and hedged them around with precautions and anxieties. The Princess, like any other spirited young girl, wanted to join something and "do her bit". Then in the autumn of 1940, not long after the Battle of Britain, it was decided, mainly for reasons of propaganda in Occupied Europe) that the young Princess should make her broadcast. She was only 14. The microphone is a forbidding and alarming instrument; she spoke.

The broadcast was more than a revelation of character; it was a uniquely-modern pointer of promise in the life of a future Queen. VJ Day—the victory celebrations found her at Buckingham Palace. Yet all the excitement and gaiety of the milling crowd outside the Palace—into which the Princess insisted on mingling—did not quite conceal from her the future of increasing responsibilities that loomed ahead.

On her 18th birthday the Princess had officially come of age, and she had, before the war ended, taken her place on a Council of Regency, in the absence of her father.

Peace brought duties. The Princess began to employ a small private secretarial staff of her own to look after her engagements. She continued to live in Buckingham Palace with a special suite of rooms set aside for her. Among the duties of returning peace were many clamorous invitations for the Royal family to visit each and every one of their Dominions.

The King decided that he would go with the whole family to South Africa. It was more than a year, however, and a rather bleak post-war year—before the Royal Party

left Portsmouth aboard H.M.S. Vanguard on February 1, 1947. But the year was very happy and auspicious for the Princess. She had met the young Prince Philip of Greece, (as he was known), in her childhood; they were both, as children, at the wedding of Prince George and Princess Marina of Greece. During the war years Philip had been invited to Buckingham Palace for several short leaves from his naval duties. But it was not until he returned from Australia in 1946 that the Princess again met Prince Philip.

Rumour soon decided that the 20-year-old Princess and the 24-year-old naval lieutenant—good-looking and dashing—were ideally matched. The son of Prince Andrew of Greece, Philip's grandfather, was Prince Louis of Battenberg who had, himself, a distinguished naval career and had married Princess Alice, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. So Princess Elizabeth and her husband are both descended from the great Queen.

### No Announcement

The Royal party left for South Africa without announcing an engagement. But the Princess was unmistakably radiant and rumour had it rightly that the Royal Family had decided to postpone the announcement until after the Princess's 21st birthday.

The Royal visit to South Africa was overwhelming and strenuous, but a success. The tour itself meant travelling 10,000 miles in two months. The King, despite the already painful dissection of his legs, was determined to complete the whole program. His Queen and his daughters tried to take some of the burden from him.

In the summer of 1947 the engagement was announced. Parliament gave its official sanction to

the proposed marriage of the heiress presumptive, and Prince Philip of Greece abandoned his claims to the Greek throne and his foreign title and became Lt. Philip Mountbatten, RN until he was ennobled by his future father-in-law to take the title the Duke of Edinburgh.

The date of the wedding was fixed for November 20. Immediately the Princess was faced with great domestic responsibilities. As the heiress to the throne she would have to keep an official household in an official residence. She also wanted to maintain a country home.

It had been decided that the Duke should continue his naval career into which he had put so much eagerness and ability. So the Princess faced the prospect of a strangely uncertain future with the heaviest responsibilities. On one thing she was determined—that she would have an entirely new or modernized home of her own, made to her own design to suit herself. It is believed that it was Queen Mary who made the acceptable suggestion that Clarence House, in the Mall, should be modernized for the young couple.

Clarence House had been built for the Duke of Clarence, (then an elderly Admiral, so there is another naval association), who later became King as William IV. The house itself was not particularly large by palace standards. Yet it was sufficient to provide the Princess and her husband with a fine suite of private apartments, in addition to the state apartments on the ground floor. The house, however, required a great deal of attention and the Princess devoted much of her time, even before she moved into it in May, 1949, to its design, arrangement and perfection.

Clarence House has only been occupied by four families since it was built not much more than 100 years ago. The first was that of William IV; the second was another Duke of Edinburgh, the son of Queen Victoria; the third was Prince Arthur of Connaught, who lived in the Mall for many years; and the fourth is "the Edinburghs" of our day.

### Planned Wedding

But before they could start putting their home in order the young couple had to plan their wedding. July was busy with invitations. In August the Royal Family retired to Balmoral and the world was delighted to see the young Duke also going north for a brief stay. The November wedding was a fine affair. It was perhaps the happiest celebration London had seen for a generation. The atmosphere was one of spontaneity and gaiety.

The Princess returned to Sandringham for Christmas with the family. There, plans for putting Clarence House in order were again discussed. The Edinburghs had already inspected the house thoroughly. There was a great deal to be done and the Princess complained as much as any more humble person of the slowness with which her decorations were completed.

### Different Designs

She and the Duke had different designers prepare plans for their separate sitting-rooms. The final effect was something rather severe and intentionally naval in the Duke's room and a yielding and relaxed effect in pastel colours in the Princess's own sitting-room.

Soon, however, news came that the Princess's engagements had been cancelled. The country hoped for an heir to the throne. That hope was realized on November 14, 1948, six months before the Edinburghs moved into Clarence House. And the bells told Britain that the Princess had a son. The baby Prince was given the name of Charles. There had not been a Royal Charles since the rollicking Stuart who squared Nell Gwynn. For a short time the Princess and her husband were allowed to live the life of any young couple with their first-born. But before long, Philip's naval duties called him to Malta where he was appointed "Commander of the Fleet" of the "Chequre". He was being groomed for the command of his own frigate, the "Magpie", which he took over in May, 1950. That he was shown no preferential treatment was obvious: the Princess had to fly to Malta to spend the Christmas of 1949 with him because he was not due for home leave.

The national joy at the birth of Princess Anne in August 1950 was short-lived. It had been obvious for some time that the King was far from well. Less than a year after Britons had acclaimed his recovery from a serious leg operation, they were once again anxiously watching the bulletin boards outside Buckingham Palace. A cold the King had caught early in 1951 developed into influenza and a few months later he underwent a lung operation. For a short time he seemed to rally, and he insisted on carrying out a heavy programme of public appearances. But it was a war, three-day walk on to the runway at London airport in January last year to watch his daughter and her husband take off for a tour of East Africa and Australia.

A few days later Prince Philip took his wife for a walk in the grounds of the house built for them as a wedding present by the people of Kenya. He told her what a shocked world already knew.

That same evening the girl who had arrived in the Colony a few days before, laughing and gay, was flying home bereaved to her mourning family to face the Queenship and to open a new chapter in the history of the Commonwealth.

## Some Highlights In The Life Of Queen Elizabeth



PRINCESS ELIZABETH as heir apparent in May 1937 after King George VI was crowned at Westminster.



YOUNG PRINCESS makes her first broadcast—talking to the children of England about the war.



ON HER 18TH BIRTHDAY in 1944 young Princess begins busy round of her first official duties.



ON CANADIAN TOUR in western Canada Princess and her husband examine gift from Indian tribe.



GUEST OF PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN in Washington as part of a three day tour of United States.



TOUR OF KENYA finds Princess greeting Prince Bin Salim after he had been overcome by shyness.



AS QUEEN in October 1952, Elizabeth II in gown of black and white satin attends Royal film.